

Compatibility Determination

Compatibility Determination: Mountain Lion Hunting

Station Name: Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona

Date Established: January 25, 1939

Establishing and Acquisition Authorities: 1) Executive Order 8039; January 25, 1939; 2) Public Law 94-223, an amendment to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966; [16 U.S.C. 668dd (a)(2); 90 STAT. 199]; February 27, 1976; and 3) Public Law 101-628; [104 STAT. 4469]; Arizona Desert Wilderness Act, Title III -Designation of Wilderness Areas to be Administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; November 28, 1990.

Purpose(s) for Which Established:

“...set apart for the conservation and development of natural wildlife resources, and for the protection of public grazing lands and natural forage resources. [Executive Order 8039]

“...consolidating the authorities relating to the various categories of areas that are administered by the Secretary of Interior for the conservation of fish and wildlife, including...game ranges....are hereby designated as the National Wildlife Refuge System,...and shall be administered by the Secretary through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. [National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended]

“...certain lands in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona, which comprise approximately 510,900 acres and certain other public lands comprising 5,300 acres which are hereby added to and incorporated within such refuge (and which shall be managed accordingly)...areas designated under this title shall be administered...in accordance with the Wilderness Act...” [Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990]

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission:

The mission of the System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Description of Proposed Use: To provide an opportunity for the public to hunt mountain lions on the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The three Game Management Units (GMU) on the Kofa NWR (45A, 45B, and 45C) would be added to a group of GMUs where mountain lion hunting is already established (GMUs 16B, 40B, 41, 43A, 43B, and 44B). The mountain lion hunting season on Kofa NWR would be concurrent with the quail season (from early October to early February annually, with the

precise dates set by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission). The existing harvest objective would remain at one mountain lion per year initially for all nine GMUs combined. This harvest objective could be raised in the future if ongoing lion population monitoring indicates a higher objective could be supported. In addition, during the general deer season, the mountain lion season would close except to those persons holding a valid deer tag. Those individuals may hunt mountain lions only until the time that they have taken a deer.

Mountain lion hunters would be responsible for calling the Arizona Game and Fish Department at 1-877-438-0447 before hunting to ensure that the harvest objective is not already met and the season has closed. All other State regulations concerning mountain lion hunting will also apply. Because the mountain lion density and the likelihood of finding and taking a mountain lion are low, is expected that the public will primarily hunt mountain lions in conjunction with hunting other species, such as quail, deer, and desert bighorn sheep.

Anticipated Impacts on Service Lands, Waters, and Interests: Little to no impact is expected to Service Lands since the mountain lion hunting would be concurrent with existing hunting on Kofa NWR. Public hunt regulations leaflets and information would require revision to include mountain lion hunting. Continuing surveys and research would be needed to monitor the impact of hunting on the lion population.

Availability of Resources: Staff, equipment, and facilities are available to administer this use.

Public Review and Comment: Public review of this compatibility determination was accomplished as follows:

1. Forwarding a postcard to interested parties regarding the availability of the compatibility determination;
2. Soliciting public comments through the use of a News Release forwarded to all media (newspapers, radio, television) in Arizona and posted on the Refuge's Public Website; and
3. Providing the document for public viewing at the Yuma County Library District, 350 S. 3rd Ave., Yuma.

Comments were received for 30 days from the date of posting. _____ comments were received on the project from a variety of individuals and groups. The substantive comments are summarized in Attachment _____.

Determination (check one below):

_____ Use is Not Compatible

X Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

None

Justification:

Limited mountain lion hunting has been determined compatible provided that the mountain lion season dates coincide with the existing quail season (from mid-October through mid-February annually) and that all State of Arizona hunting regulations and Refuge regulations are applied. This use will not diminish the primary purposes of conservation and development of natural wildlife resources. This use will meet the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System by providing renewable resources while conserving wildlife resources on these lands.

Signature: Refuge Manager _____
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence: Regional Chief _____
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-Evaluation Date: None